



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Jewel Cave National Monument
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Custer, SD 57730

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Free Tours at Jewel and Wind Caves in Celebration of National Public Lands Day

WIND CAVE NATIONAL PARK, SD – Jewel Cave National Monument and Wind Cave National Park will be offering free tours on Saturday, September 26, as part of National Public Lands Day. Additionally, Wind Cave will also host a volunteer project for a special day of service and celebration.

“National Public Lands Day is a celebration of the work, play, and learning that takes place on public lands every day,” said Wind Cave National Park Superintendent Vidal Dávila. “We will be part of the more than 2,200 sites across the country with people beautifying the land, improving their fitness, and enjoying the outdoors.”

The Friends of Wind Cave National Park will be working on a project involving planting trees, weeding the lawn, and exotic plant removal. People interested in helping are encouraged to meet at the park visitor center at 8 a.m. dressed for the weather with work gloves and water. The work project ends around noon; participants will then return to the headquarters area for a free lunch. Email membership@friendsofwindcavenp.org if you would like to participate. Group size is limited to 20 people.

Acting Superintendent Don Hart of Jewel Cave National Monument states, “The early autumn season is a beautiful time to visit natural sites in the Black Hills and experience the fall scenery. The area is also much less crowded and offers great wildlife viewing opportunities this time of year.”

Anyone interested in touring one of the caves for free is encouraged to arrive early. All tours begin at the respective visitor centers, and cave tour tickets will be issued on a first come, first served basis. This event can be extremely popular resulting in long wait times and possible “sold out” tours.

Jewel Cave visitors may choose either the Scenic Tour or Discovery Talk as they venture into the third-longest cave in the world. The Scenic Tour provides an opportunity to

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view a variety of beautiful, colorful, and rare cave formations for which Jewel Cave is famous. This half-mile tour is moderately strenuous, follows a paved lighted trail with over 700 stairs, and lasts approximately an hour and twenty minutes. The Discovery Talk is a twenty-minute wheelchair accessible program, conducted in one large room of the cave. Cave tours begin at 9:20 a.m. with the last tour at 3:35 p.m.

Wind Cave will be offering Natural Entrance Tours beginning at 9 a.m. and continuing throughout the day until 4 p.m. These hour and fifteen minute tours are moderately strenuous and include 300 stairs, most of which go down. Cave temperatures at both caves are around 50 °F. A light coat or sweater and sturdy walking shoes are recommended.

National Public Lands Day is a time to celebrate the heritage sites of the United States. All visitors are encouraged to explore these natural and cultural treasures and take the time to learn the significance behind each location. For more information, contact the visitor centers at 605-673-8300 (Jewel Cave) or 605-745-4600 (Wind Cave).



Photo Caption: All tours at Jewel and Wind Caves will be free on National Public Lands Day, Saturday, September 26. (NPS Photo)

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